

**SUMMARY OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 15, 1999**

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, June 15, 1999, at 1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). The meeting was led by its chair-elect, Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The principle purpose of the meeting was to review the status of Chapter 2, the Radiochemistry Appendix, and other items in preparation of NELAC V.*

INTRODUCTION

Ms. Burmeister began the conference call by reviewing the list of attendees.

SECTION 2.0 (REVISED)

Section 2.0, revised in the May 18, 1999 meeting by teleconference, refers to PT providers being accredited by a "Registrar Accreditation Board (RAB)-approved Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor (PTPA)." The problem is that this board does not accredit accreditors at this time. The intent was for programs where National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) accreditation was not available, that the PT Provider be accredited by someone who was nationally recognized. To correct this sentence, "RAB-approved PTPA" will be changed to "nationally recognized PTPA."

Ms. Burmeister will send a modified Section 2.0 to Mr. Matt Caruso, who offered to include it in the hand-out materials for participants at NELAC V. She will also revise the frequently asked question (FAQ) #6, with the same modification.

EXPECTED ISSUES AT NELAC V

In response to a request from the NELAC Board of Directors, Ms. Burmeister asked the committee what issues are expected to arise at NELAC V. This list will be used to help them prepare for the upcoming annual meeting. Possible issues are:

- explanation for the delay in accreditation of PT Providers
- additional analytes
- where to obtain PT samples in the interim
- solid waste
- radiochemistry
- the change in accreditation by the 80% rule for interdependant analytes (for initial accreditation) to accreditation on an analyte-by-analyte (for both initial and continuing accreditation)

Ms. Burmeister will convey these issues to the board.

Radiochemistry (Appendix G)

Mr. Chuck Wibby reviewed the changes in Appendix G, Radiochemistry, which was sent to the committee for review (currently revision 12). He said that the only written comments received, with suggested changes, were from Donovan Porterfield. Mr. Porterfield requested 17 changes: 12 non-technical issues and 5 technical issues. Eleven of the 12 non-technical changes were incorporated into Appendix G, but one was not because it was outside of NELAC's scope. Mr. Wibby said that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) did not raise any objections to the non-technical issues. USEPA did, however, have objections to many of the suggested technical changes, and requested historical data to review before considering any such changes.

It was decided that in order for laboratories to satisfy both the NELAC standards and USEPA's national standards, a laboratory would have to generate two different reports. However, they would be able to use the same study results to satisfy the requirements of both. As an example, USEPA requires analysis in triplicate, while NELAC requires only a single analysis. To satisfy NELAC requirements, the laboratory would need to submit results from one of the three analyses (NELAC will not determine acceptable/not acceptable status by looking at the spread of the three results).

In reviewing Appendix G, some objections were raised by the committee to the inclusion of text from USEPA's national standards, rather than being included by reference alone. Sample design, concentration ranges, acceptance criteria, and reporting requirements (timetables) had been included in an attempt to simplify the PT requirements for readers. However, this was not consistent with the style of the rest of the chapter, and would need to be revised should USEPA requirements change. Therefore, this material will have to be removed from the appendix and included by reference only. It is the committee's intent to provide the deleted material as an informational aid, which will be made available from the PT Chair.

Ms. Reenie Parris asked when a version will be available that NIST can cite. Mr. Wibby responded that if the committee can reach agreement with USEPA and the Department of Energy (DOE), it may be possible to vote on Appendix G (as a floor amendment) at NELAC V.

Analyte List and Regression Equations

The regression equations are not ready at this time. However, the analyte list is ready and all analyte numbers (database reporting IDs) have been assigned.

USEPA/NIST/Environmental Monitoring Management Council (EMMC) ITEMS

Ms. Reenie Parris reviewed the status of NIST activities. She said that of the 12 applicants for becoming NELAC-accredited PT Providers, 7 had been approved for conducting on-site assessments. One of these has been completed, and the last is scheduled for August 11-12, 1999. The other 5 applicants have some follow up to do for deficiencies (mostly documentation), but should follow through as well. September 1, 1999 may be set as the date for accrediting the first

class, but this has not been set officially. Ms. Parris said that a formal presentation by NIST at NELAC V has not been scheduled, but that she will be at the conference on June 29.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of this committee is scheduled for June 29, 1999 at the Fifth NELAC Annual Meeting.

**ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 15, 1999**

Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Ms. Burmeister will send a revised Section 2.0 to Mr. Matt Caruso to insert in the NELAC V participant materials; she will also revise FAQ #6.	
2.	Ms. Barb Burmeister will convey the PT Committee's "expected issues" for the annual meeting to the NELAC Board.	
3.	Mr. Chuck Wibby will revise Appendix G (remove sample design, concentration ranges, acceptance criteria, and reporting requirements).	NELAC V

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PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 15, 1999

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